

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1313

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 1320

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NO, CU, AO

SUBJECT: NORDLI DEFENDS CONTINUED NORWEGIAN AID TO CUBA DESPITE
ANGOLA -- USES BRITISH WARSHIPS OFF ICELAND IN AN ANOLOGY

REF: OSLO 1036

SUMMARY: IN MARCH 9 SPEACH ALSO COVERING MANY OTHER TOPICS, PRIME
MINISTER NODLI TRIED TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE FROM
CRITICS OF HIS GOVERNMENT FOR NOT BREAKING OFF AID TO
CUBA (REFTEL). HE DISAPPROVED OF CUBA'S ANOGLA INTERVENTION BUT
DOWNPLAYED ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE AFRICAN LIBERATION
CONTEXT. MANY IN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE VIEW CUBA'S
ANGOLA EFFORT POITIVELY, HE SAID, AND A NORWEGIAN
REACTION AGAINST CUBA MIGHT SEEM DIRECTED AGAINST
THE MPLA AND ANGOLA. NORWAY DISAPPROVES OF INDIVIDUAL
ACTS OF MANY COUNTRIES, HE SAID, BUT CANNOT THEREFORE
BREAK OFF OTHER RELATIONS WITH THEM. AS AN EXAMPLE,
HE NOTED THAT NORWAY CRITICIZES BRITISH USE OF WARSHIPS
OFF ICELAND, BUT STILL WANTS TO KEEP UP ITS CLOSE
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RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN. NORDLI'S BRITISH EXAMPLE

DREW OPPOSITION PRESS CRITICISM AND MAY LIVE TO HAUNT HIM. NORDLI SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED HE EQUATED BRITISH AND CAUBAN CONDUCT AS CRITICS IMPLIED. IN HIS DENIAL, NORDLI DREW DISTINCTION BETWEEN BRITAIN AND COUNTRIES PROVIDING WEAPONS IN ANGOLA. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE ASSURED US THIS WAS NOT IN ANY WAY MEANT TO REFER TO US. END SUMMARY
END CONFIDENTIAL. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

1. IN PART OF A WIDE-RANGING MARCH 9 SPEECH TO AN OSLO LABOR PARTY GAETHERING, COVERING DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN PROBLEMS AND POLICY, PRIME MINISTER ODVAR NODLI TRIED TO REGAIN INITIATIVE FROM CRITICS OF NORWAY'S DECISION NOT TO BREAK CURRENT AID CONTRACTS WITH CUBA (REFTEL). NODLI FOCUSED ATTENTION ON AFRICA'S PROGRESS IN EMERGING FROM COLONIAL OPPRESSION AND ON NORWAY'S NON-MILITARY SUPPORT TO AFRICA'S LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND STATES.

2. UNFORTUNATELY, SAID NORDLI, THE WEST BEARS MUCH RESPONSIBILITY FOR AFRICA'S COLONIAL PAST, HAS DONE LITTLE TO HELP AFRICA FREE ITSELF WITHOUT VIOLENCE AND HAS IDENTIFIED ITSELF TOO OFTEN WITH "THE WRONG SIDE". WHEN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE THEN TAKES MILITARY FORM, HE SAID, WE HAVE NO MORAL AUTHORITY TO CONDEMN EVEN WHEN IT TAKES DIRECTIONS WE CANNOT SUPPORT.

3. FORTUNATELY, ANGOLA'S COLONIAL RULE COLLAPSED WHEN PORTUGAL LIBERATED ITSELF, NORDLI SAID, BUT BITTER INNER STRUGGLE BETWEEN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS ENSUED, WITH OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF WESTERN AND EASTERN BIG POWERS. SUCH INTERFERENCE, REGARDLESS OF WHERE OR BY WHOM, CLASHES WITH INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRINCIPLES NORWAY ACCEPTS. BUT INTERNATIONAL COEXISTENCE IS COMPLEX AND A COUNTRY CANNOT BE BRANDED UNACCEPTABLE IN ALL CONTEXTS JUST BECUASE IT ACTS REPREHENSIBLY IN NORWEGIAN EYES IN ONE. FOR EXAMPLE, NORWAY CRITICIZES BRITISH NVAL VESSELS IN ICELANDIC WATERS, BUT THIS DOESN'T PREVENT NORWAY FROM WANTING
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CONTINUED CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN. NORWAY HAS CRITIICIZED COUNTRIES SENDING ARMS TO ANGOLA OR INTERVENING MORE DIRECTLY, BUT THAT MUST NOT LEAD NORWAY TO SEVER RELATIONS WITH THOSE COUNTRIES IN OTHER FIELDS.

4. WE MUST RECOGNIZE, SAID NORDLI, THAT IN LARGE PARTS OF AFRICA, IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND OTHER

PARTS OF THE WORLD, CUBA'S ANGOLA EFFORT IS SEEN AS
A HELPING HAND TO A FIGHTING LIBERATION ARMY. WE
MUST RECOGNIZE, HE SAID, THAT ANORWEGIAN REACTION
AGAINST CUBA CAN BE INTERPRETED AS A REACTION AGAINST
MPLA AND THE NEW ANGOLA STATE NORWAY JUST RE-
COGNIZED.

5. NORWEAY'S LEADING NEWSPAPER AND OPPOSITION VOICE,
"AFTENPOSTEN", SEIZED ON NORDLI'S BRITISH WARSHIP
EXAMPLE AND HEADLINED ITS ARTICLE "NORDLI COMPARES
CUBA WITH GREAT BRITAIN". "AFTENPOSTEN" CALLED NORDLI'S
REMARKS WRONG, UNWISE AND DISAPPOINTING--WRONG BECAUSE
BRITAIN WAS RIGHT UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW,
UNLIKE SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION--UNWISE
BECAUSE BRITAIN IS NORWAY'S ALLY--DOUBLY DISAPPOINTING
WHEN NORWAY'S FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP'S PATIENCE
WITH EAST BLOC AND ITS WAY OF THINKING SEEMS LIMITED
ONLY BY NORWEGIAN PUBLIC OPINION. OTHER NON-SOCIALIST
PAPERS WERE ALSO CRITICAL. LABOR'S OSLO DAILY
"ARBEIDERBLADET", ON THE OTHER HAND, EDITORIALIZED
IN SUPPORT OF AFRICAN LIBERATION. "ARBEIDER-
BLADET" CRITICIZED WEST FOR NOT HELPING LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, PRAISED
NORWAY AS AN EXCEPTION, VIEWED SOVIET AND CUBAN SUPPORT
POSITIVELY IN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT, DENIED THAT AFRICAN
LIBERATION MOVEMENTS HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN COMMUNIST OR
FALLEN UNDER SOVIET DOMINATION, SAID SOUTH AFRICA
INTERVENED FIRST AND URGED THE
WEST TO HELP AFRICA PEACEFULLY LIBERATE AREAS STILL
RULED BY MINORITY WHITE REGIMES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 1320

6 IN A LA LETTER TO "AFTENPOSTEN" PUBLISHED MARCH 15, NORDLI ENDEAVORED TO PUT HIS REMARKS IN CONTEXT. OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE SUCH AS IN ANGOLA, HE REPEATED, CLASHES WITH THE PRINCIPLES NORWAY CAN ACCEPT IN INTERNATIONAL COEXISTENCE, REGARDLESS OF WHERE OR BY WHOM. HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED DISAPPROVAL OF CUBA'S ENGAGEMENT IN ANGOLA. HE USED HIS BRITISH EXAMPLE DURING GENERAL THOUGHTS ON COEXISTENCE BETWEEN NATIONS TO ILLUSTRATE THAT EVEN NORWAY'S STRONG FRIENDS CAN OCCASIONALLY ACT IN WAYS NORWAY DISAPPROVES, WITHOUT NORWAY BREAKING ANY ESTABLISHED RELATIONS. HE HAD NOT, HE CONCLUDED, EQUATED BRITAIN WITH THE COUNTRIES WHICH SENT ARMS TO ANGOLA.

END UNCLASSIFIED. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL

7. COMMENT: NORDLI MAY REGRET OPENING HIMSELF TO ACCUSATIONS OF EQUATING GREAT BRITAIN'S USE OF NAVAL VESSELS OFF ICELAND WITH CUBA'S MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. NON-SOCIALISTS WILL CONTINUE
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TO CRITICIZE HIM SEVERELY, THOUGH THIS MAY HELP HIM A LITTLE WITH THE LEFT. INDEED, ONLY THIS SMALL, RATHER PERIPHERAL PART OF HIS LONG SPEECH MAY BE REMEMBERED. SENIOR OFFICIAL TOLD EMBASSY FOREIGN MINISTRY DID NOT WRITE OR REVIEW SPEECH AND DID NOT KNOW WHO DID. HE COMMENTED THAT PERHAPS PRIME MINISTER HAD NOT ADEQUATELY CONSIDERED POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS HIS COMMENTS ABOUT THE UK MIGHT HAVE, ESPECIALLY AT THIS DELICATE TIME WHEN NORWAY IS TRYING TO MEDIATE THE COD WAR. INDEED, WE KNOW THAT THE BRITISH EMBASSY HERE HAS TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT THEY DID NOT THINK NORDLI'S STATEMENT WAS HELPFUL.

8. WHILE NORDLI'S EXPLANATION MIGHT HELP REDUCE BRITISH DISPLEASURE, HIS STATEMENT THAT HE HAD NOT EQUATED BRITAIN WITH COUNTRIES SENDING ARMS TO ANGOLA COULD HAVE HAD IMPLICATIONS FOR US. DCM CONTACTED FOREIGN MINISTRY POLITICAL DIRECTOR GENERAL VIBE,

WHO UNDERSTOOD AND DULY TOOK NOTE OF OUR CONCERN AND
GAVE ASSURANCES ON BEHALF OF FOREIGN MINISTER
FRYDENLUND THAT PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS WERE IN NO
WAY DIRECTED TOWARD U.S. END CONFIDENTIAL
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